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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes findings from the Learner, Parent, and Public Satisfaction Survey, Alberta, Canada, a set of four surveys conducted annually to provide feedback form parents, learners, and the public regarding their perceptions of Alberta's learning system. Responses were received from 800 parents of severe special needs children, 818 parents of regular education students, 800 high schools students, and 3,109 members of the general public. The vast majority of high school students and their parents are satisfied with the quality of education in Alberta, and the greater the involvement of the stakeholder, the higher their degree of satisfaction. Most high school students and their parents are satisfied with the responsiveness of the education system to their needs and expectations. Most parents and students agree that students are learning what they need to know. Overall, adult learners are satisfied with the quality of adult education programs, and most learners and nonlearners are satisfied that adults are getting the skills they need for the workforce. Most high school students are satisfied that graduates are well prepared for citizenship, as are more than half of parents (a significant rise from the preceding year). Half of the parents and slightly more than one-third of the public have been involved in decision making at their local school. More than two-thirds of parents and slightly more than half of the public are satisfied that they are receiving value for the money spent in their community's schools. An appendix discusses the research background and methodology. (Contains 4 tables and 21 graphs). (SLD)

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2002/2003 LEARNER, PARENT AND PUBLIC SATISFACTION SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared by
PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Learner, Parent and Public Satisfaction Survey is a set of four surveys conducted annually to provide feedback from parents, learners, and the public regarding their perceptions of Alberta's learning system. R. A. Malatest & Associates was retained by Alberta Learning to conduct this set of surveys for 2002/03.

This year's set of surveys was conducted from early February to early March 2003.

The main objectives of this study are to determine:

- Satisfaction with the overall quality, responsiveness, and accessibility of Alberta's learning system (Alberta Learning's Business Plan).
- Satisfaction with the preparation of learners for lifelong learning, employment, and citizenship (Alberta Learning's Business Plan).

Key Findings

The vast majority of high school students and parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs) are satisfied with the quality of education.

The greater the involvement the stakeholder had in the learning system, the higher their level of satisfaction. 96% of high school students are satisfied with the quality of basic education, followed by 88% of parents of ECS-Grade 12 students, 82% of parents of severe special needs children and 67% of the public.

Most high school students and parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs) are satisfied with the responsiveness of the education system to their needs and expectations.

91% of high school students are satisfied with the responsiveness of the educational system, followed by 80% of parents of children with severe special needs and 75% of parents (ECS-Grade 12). 56% of the public surveyed indicated the responsiveness of the educational system was satisfactory.

The majority of parents and the public agree that students are learning what they need to know.

Parent (ECS-Grade 12) agreement was high at 83%, while public agreement was 65%.

Overall, adults are satisfied with the quality of learning programs in Alberta's adult learning system.

Adult learner satisfaction with the quality of learning programs in the adult learning system was 82%. Public (non-learner) satisfaction was 72%.

Most adult learners and the public (non-learners) are satisfied that adults taking education or training are getting the skills they need for the workforce.

Adult learner satisfaction was 79%, while public (non-learner) satisfaction was 71%.

The overwhelming majority of adult learners are satisfied with the education or training they received.

Adult learner satisfaction was very high, with 92% of the adult learners surveyed expressing satisfaction with the education or training they have received.

Most high school students are satisfied that graduates are well prepared for citizenship, compared to more than half of parents (ECS-Grade 12) and the public. Satisfaction for parents (ECS-Grade 12) rose significantly in 2002/03.

The vast majority (89%) of high school students are satisfied that graduates from Alberta's learning system are well prepared for citizenship, compared to 62% of parents and 59% of the public.

Satisfaction for parents (ECS-Grade 12) increased from 55% in 2001/02 to 62% in 2002/03.

The majority of high school students and more than half of parents and the public agree that learners have access to the education and training they want throughout their lifetime.

Agreement among the stakeholder groups is as follows:

- 81% for high school students
- 61% for parents
- 58% for the public

Half of the parents and slightly more than one-third of the public have been involved in decision making at their local school.

Parents are almost evenly split between those who have been involved in the decision making process at a school in their community (50%) and those who have had very little or no involvement (50%). 36% of the public responded that they have been involved in some decision making process at their local school.

Over two-thirds of parents and slightly more than half the public are satisfied that they are receiving value for the money spent in their community's schools.

70% of parents are satisfied that they are receiving value for money spent in their child's school, while 54% of the public is satisfied that they are receiving value for money that is spent in schools in their community.

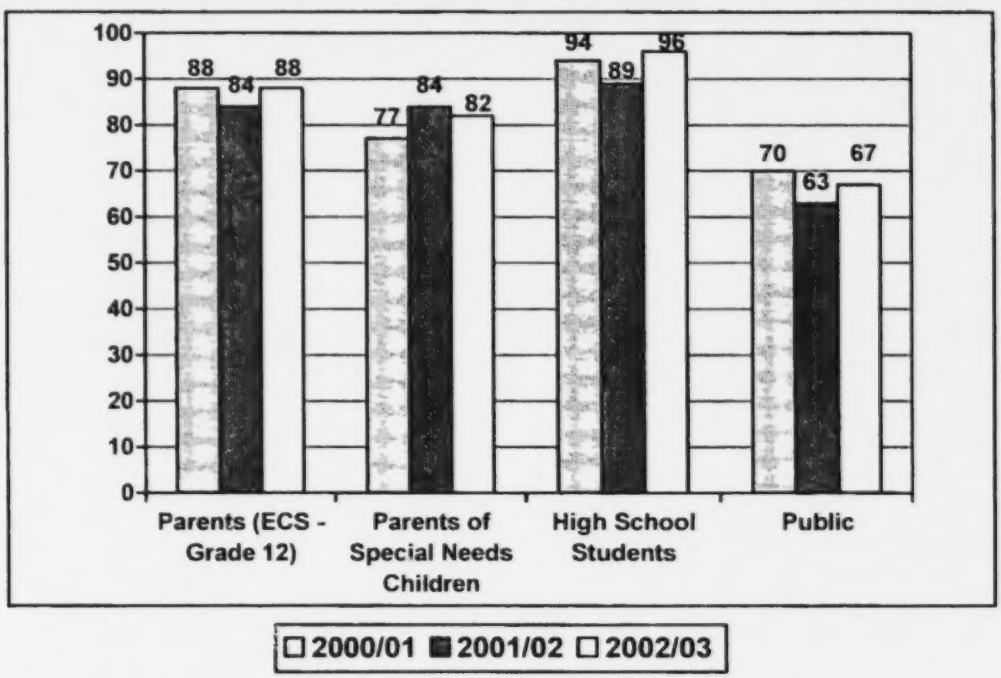
I. OVERALL QUALITY AND RESPONSIVENESS OF EDUCATION SYSTEM

Quality of Education

The vast majority of high school students and parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs) are satisfied with the quality of education.

Parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs), high school students and the public were asked to rate their satisfaction with the elementary, junior and senior high educational system. The greater the involvement the stakeholder had in the learning system, the higher their level of satisfaction. Thus high school students (96%) are the most satisfied with the quality of basic education followed by parents of both ECS-Grade 12 (88%) and severe special needs (82%) students and the public (67%).

Satisfaction with Quality of Education



Note that each respondent group was asked this question from their perspective:

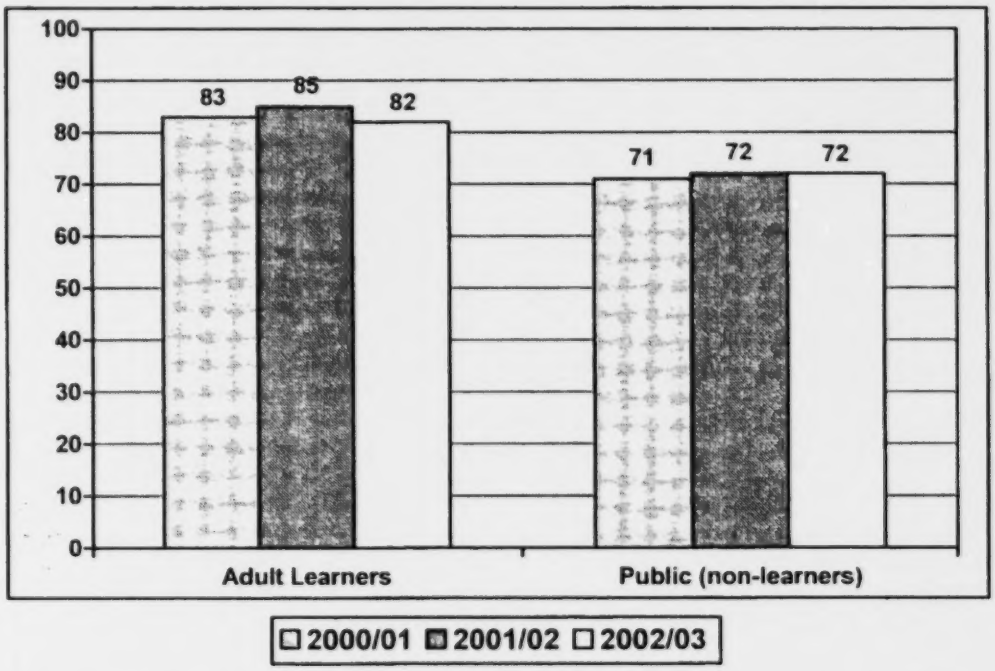
- for parents, it was the quality of education their child was receiving
- for students, it was the quality of education in their school
- for the public, it was the quality of education students received at schools in their community.

Overall, adults are satisfied with the quality of learning programs in Alberta's adult learning system.

Adult learner satisfaction with the quality of learning programs in the adult learning system was very high at 82%.

Public (non-learner) satisfaction with the quality of learning programs in the adult learning system was 72%.

Satisfaction with Quality of Adult Learning System



For both respondent groups the 2002/03 results are not substantially different than those from 2001/02.

The overwhelming majority of adult learners are satisfied with the education or training they received.

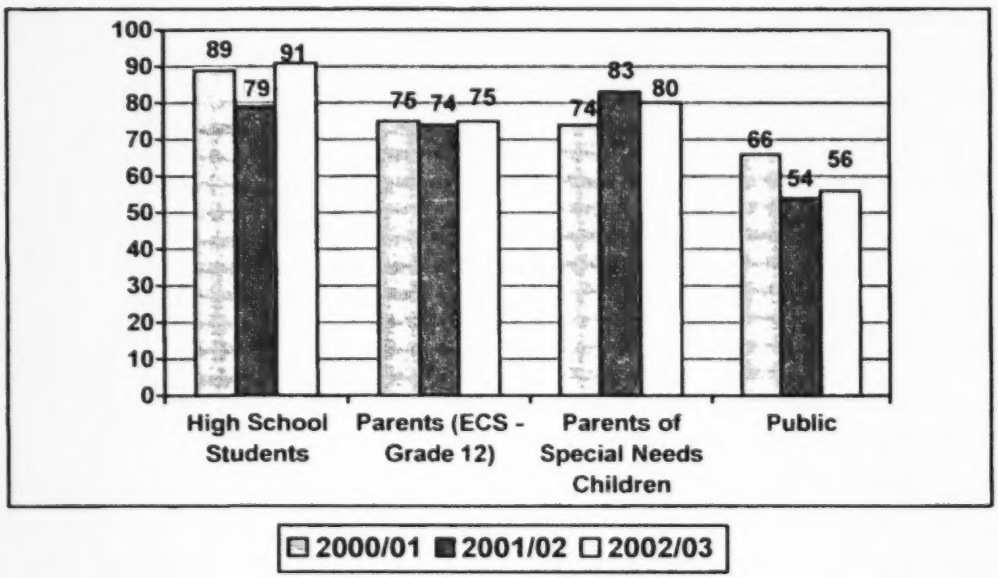
92% of the adult learners surveyed expressed satisfaction (39% "very satisfied" and 53% "satisfied") with the education or training they have received. This is slightly lower than the result of 94% in 2001/02.

Responsiveness

Most high school students and parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs) are satisfied with the responsiveness of the education system to their needs and expectations.

Stakeholders in Alberta's educational system generally agree the system is responsive to their needs and expectations. High school students (91%) were the most satisfied with the responsiveness of the educational system, followed by parents of children with severe special needs (80%) and parents of ECS-Grade 12 students (75%). Unlike the other stakeholder groups, however, the public was substantially less satisfied with educational system responsiveness. Slightly more than half (56%) of the public surveyed indicated the responsiveness of the education system was satisfactory.

Responsiveness of the Education System to Needs and Expectations



Satisfaction with the responsiveness of the education system was maintained or increased for students, parents (ECS-Grade 12) and the public. Satisfaction for parents of severe special needs children declined by 3% in 2002/03.

II. PREPARATION OF LEARNERS

Overall Student Learning

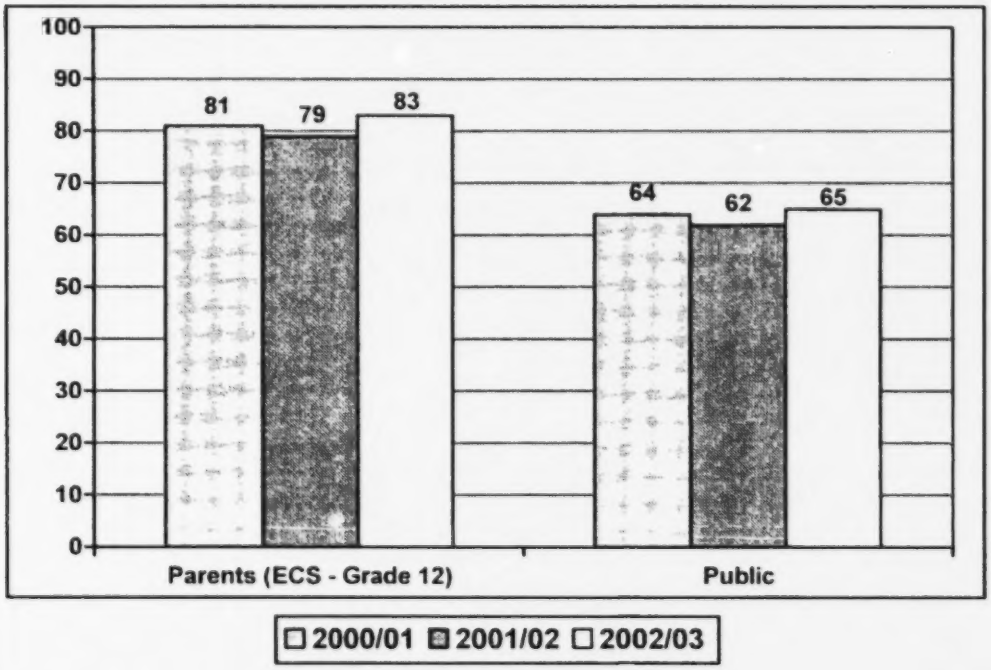
The majority of parents and the public agree that students are learning what they need to know.

Parents were asked to consider what is being taught in their child's school and rate their level of agreement that students are learning what they need to know. Most parents (83%) agreed that students are learning what they need to know at their school.

65% of the public agreed that students are taught what they need to know.

For both respondent groups, the results are slightly higher than those from 2001/02.

Agreement that Students are Learning What They Need to Know



Parents of students (both ECS-Grade 12 and severe special needs) and the public were asked to rate their level of agreement that students are learning what they need to know in a number of core skill areas. Compared to the public, parents of ECS-Grade 12 students are more inclined to agree that students are learning what they need to know overall and in core curriculum areas. Similarly, parents of children with severe special needs expressed slightly lower levels of

satisfaction than parents of ECS-Grade 12 students with what their child is learning in mathematics, reading, and writing when agreement levels were calculated excluding parents who answered "don't know/no response."

Parents of ECS-Grade 12 are most satisfied that students are learning what they need to know in science (85%) and reading and math (83%). The area of lowest satisfaction was technology skills (71%).

The public's highest level of satisfaction was in the area of science, where 79% felt what is being taught is appropriate. The subject area of writing (60%) received the lowest satisfaction rating.

Subject	Parents of ECS to Grade 12 Students		Public		Parents of severe special needs Children	
	2001/ 02	2002/ 03	2001/ 02	2002/ 03	2001/ 02	2002/ 03
Reading	82%	83%	64%	67%	56%	68%
Science	82%	85%	77%	79%	N/A	N/A
Mathematics	80%	83%	68%	70%	50%	62%
Writing	77%	80%	59%	60%	59%	65%
Social Studies	77%	80%	68%	69%	N/A	N/A
Technology Skills	68%	71%	61%	64%	N/A	N/A

Results for all subject areas across all respondent groups have increased since 2001/02.

Parents are generally satisfied that the learning expectations placed on students are appropriate, while less than half the public feel that expectations placed on students are appropriate.

Parents and the public were asked to indicate whether they felt the learning expectations placed on students are "too high", "about right", or "too low". Most parents (61%) feel that learning expectations are about right, and there was a rough balance between those who feel they are "too high" (17%) and "too low" (20%).

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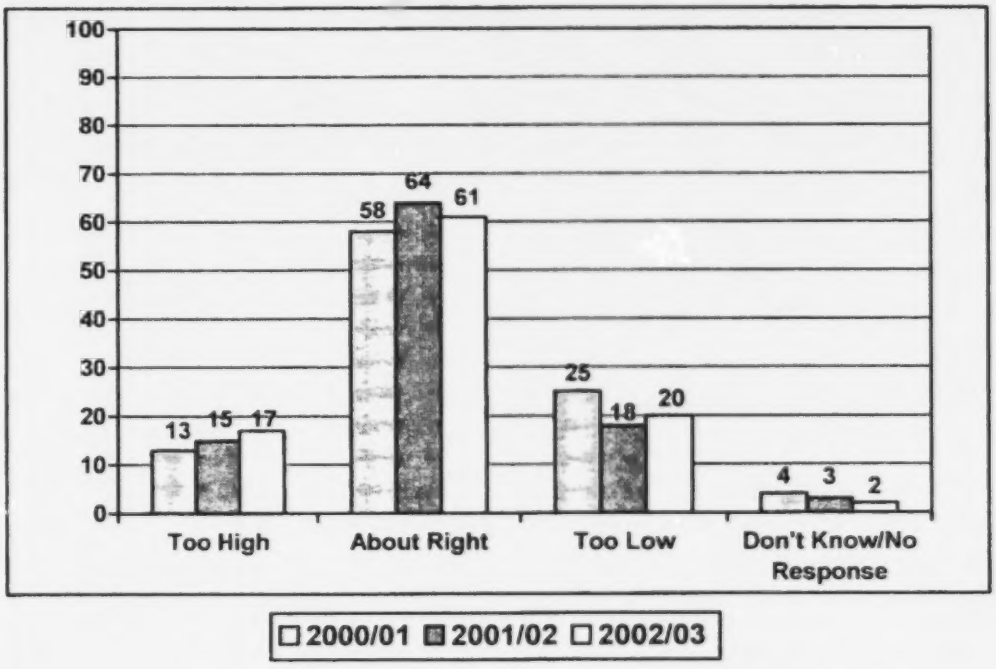
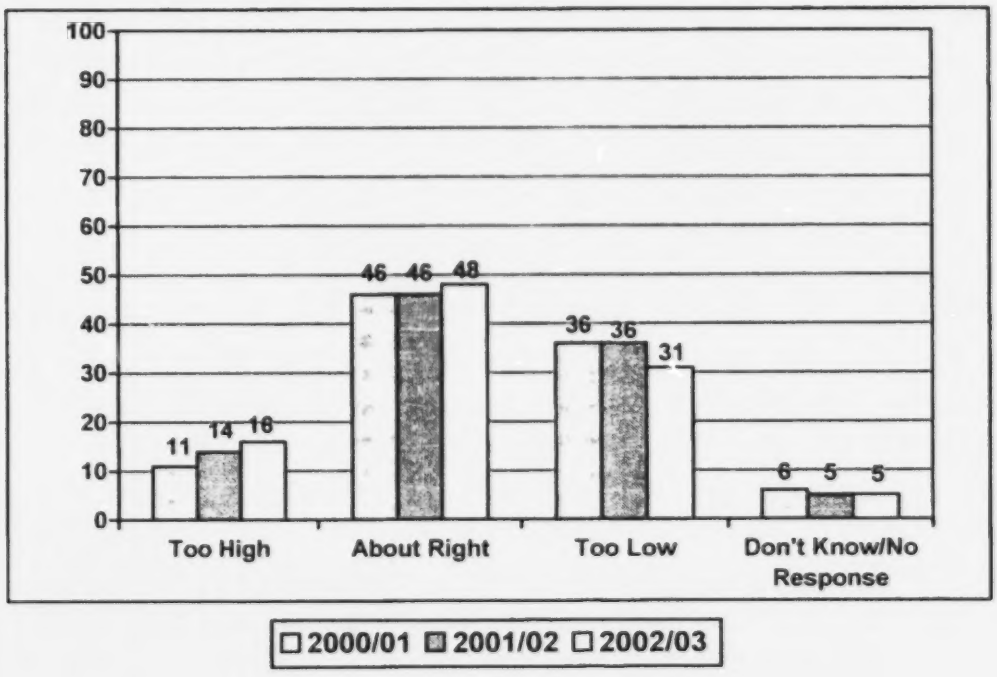
Parent Opinion that the Learning Expectations Placed on Students Are...



Public Opinion that the Learning Expectations Placed on Students Are...



Preparation for Lifelong Learning

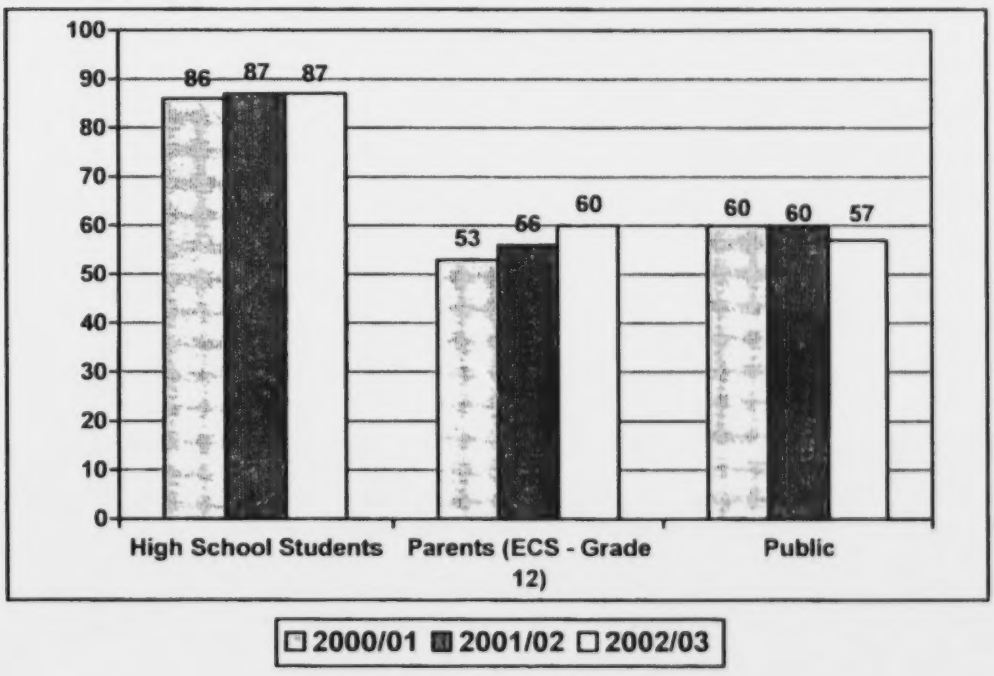
High school student agreement that high school graduates are prepared for post-secondary education and training is much higher than that for parents and the public.

The majority of high school students agreed (87%) that high school graduates from Alberta's learning system are well prepared for post-secondary education and training.

Just over half (60%) of the parents agreed that high school graduates in Alberta are prepared to enter post-secondary education and training. A large proportion (15%) of the parents surveyed felt that they did not know or could not comment on the preparedness of high school graduates for further education and training. Importantly, parents with students in grades 7 to 9 are more likely than parents with children in any other grade to disagree (31%) that high school graduates are prepared for post-secondary education and training.

57% of the public agreed that high school graduates are being prepared for post-secondary education and training.

Agreement that High School Graduates are Prepared to Enter Post-Secondary Education and Training

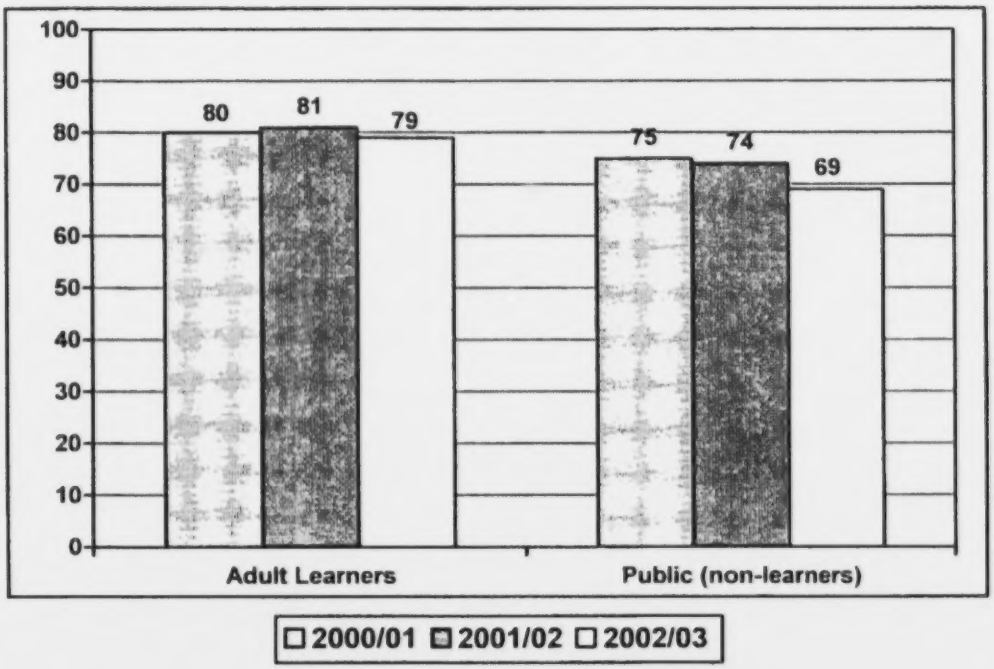


Most adult learners and the public (non-learners) feel adults taking education or training are well prepared for learning throughout their lifetime.

79% of adult learners reported that adults taking education or training are being taught the appropriate combination of skills and knowledge to prepare them for lifelong learning.

69% of the public was satisfied that adult learners are given the appropriate skill and knowledge to prepare them for learning throughout their lifetime. 19% of the public did not know or gave no response.

Satisfaction that Adults Taking Education/Training Are Taught the Appropriate Combination of Skills/Knowledge to Prepare for Learning Throughout Their Lifetime



The satisfaction for the adult learner group is consistent with the results from 2001/02. The satisfaction for the public (non-learners) is slightly lower than in 2002 (decline of 5%) due to a 5% decrease in the number of respondents who indicated they were "satisfied".

The vast majority of high school students intend to pursue a university or college education

94% of high school students agreed they planned to pursue a university or college education, while 47% agreed they planned to pursue a trade as their career choice.

High School Student Plans

Question	2001/02	2002/03
I plan to pursue a university or college education	93%	94%
I plan to pursue a trade as my career choice	40%	47%

Agreement for plans to pursue a university or college education is consistent with the results from 2001/02. Agreement regarding plans to pursue a trade has increased by 7% from 2001/02. Note that the two statements are not mutually exclusive, thus a student could respond positively to both statements.

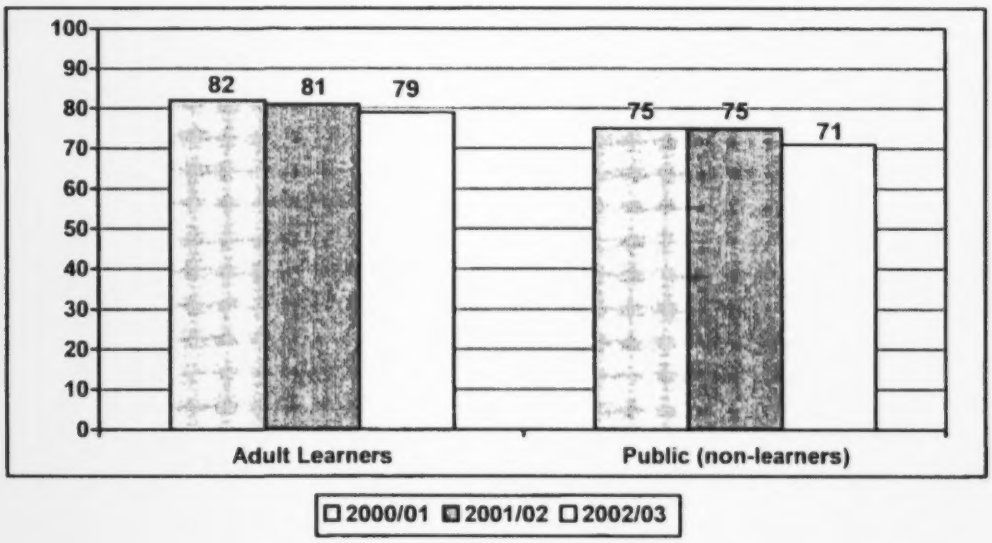
Preparation for the Workforce

Most adult learners and the public (not adult learners) are satisfied that adults taking education or training are getting the skills they need for the workforce.

79% of adult learners surveyed are satisfied that adults taking education or training are getting the skills they need to prepare them for the workforce. This is a slight decline from the results of 2001/02.

71% of the public (non-learners) is satisfied that adult learners are being prepared for the workforce, which is a decline of 4% from the results for 2001/02.

Satisfaction that Adults Taking Education or Training are Getting the Skills/Knowledge to Prepare Them for the Workforce



Preparation for Citizenship

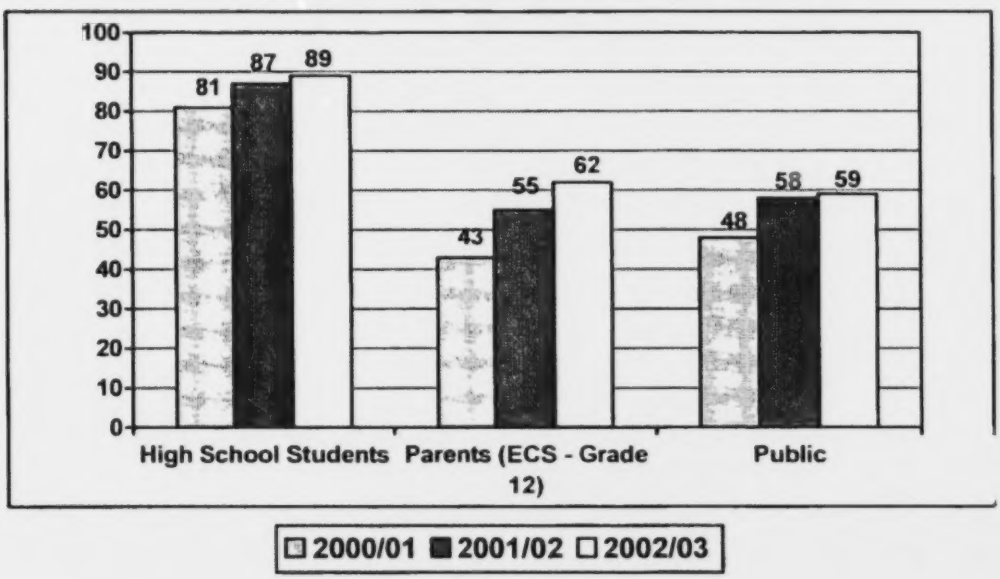
Most high school students are satisfied that graduates are well prepared for citizenship, compared to more than half of parents (ECS-Grade 12) and the public.

The vast majority (89%) of high school students were satisfied that graduates from Alberta's learning system are well prepared for citizenship.

62% of the parents indicated they are satisfied that high school graduates are well prepared for citizenship. Note that 11% of parents felt they could not rate the preparedness of high school graduates for citizenship.

59% of the public agreed that high school graduates are being prepared for citizenship.

Satisfaction that High School Graduates are Well Prepared for Citizenship



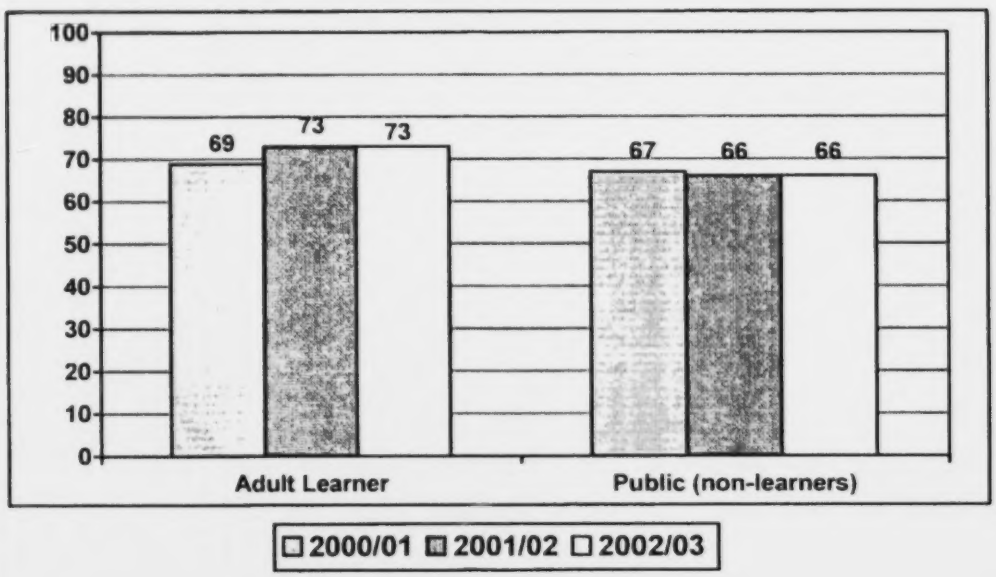
Satisfaction has increased significantly for the parents of ECS-Grade 12 students and slightly for high school students and the public when compared to the results from 2001/02.

The majority of adult learners and two-thirds of the public feel that adult learners are being prepared for citizenship.

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of adult learners are satisfied that the education and training available prepares them for citizenship. 16% of respondents were unable to provide an answer to the question.

66% of the public expressed satisfaction that adult learners are being well prepared for citizenship.

Satisfaction that Adult Learners are Well Prepared for Citizenship



The satisfaction for both respondent groups in 2002/03 is consistent with the results for 2001/02.

III. ACCESSIBILITY OF EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Access to Education

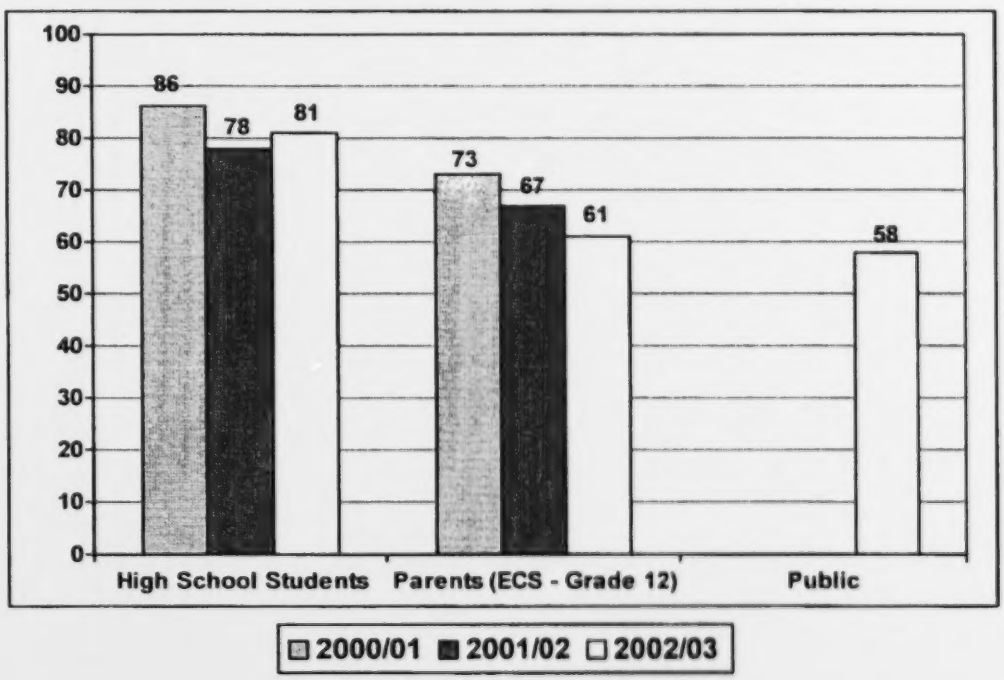
The majority of high school students and more than half of parents and the public agree that learners have access to the education and training they want throughout their lifetime.

The majority (81%) of high school students surveyed agreed, either strongly agreed (19%) or agreed (62%), that learners in Alberta have access to the education and training they want throughout their lifetime.

More than half of parents agreed (61%), either "agreed" (50%) or "strongly agreed" (11%), that learners in Alberta have access.

Over half (58%) of the public agreed that all learners had access to education and training throughout their lives (9% "strongly agree" and 49% "agree").

Agreement that Learners have Access to Education/Training They Want Throughout Their Lifetime



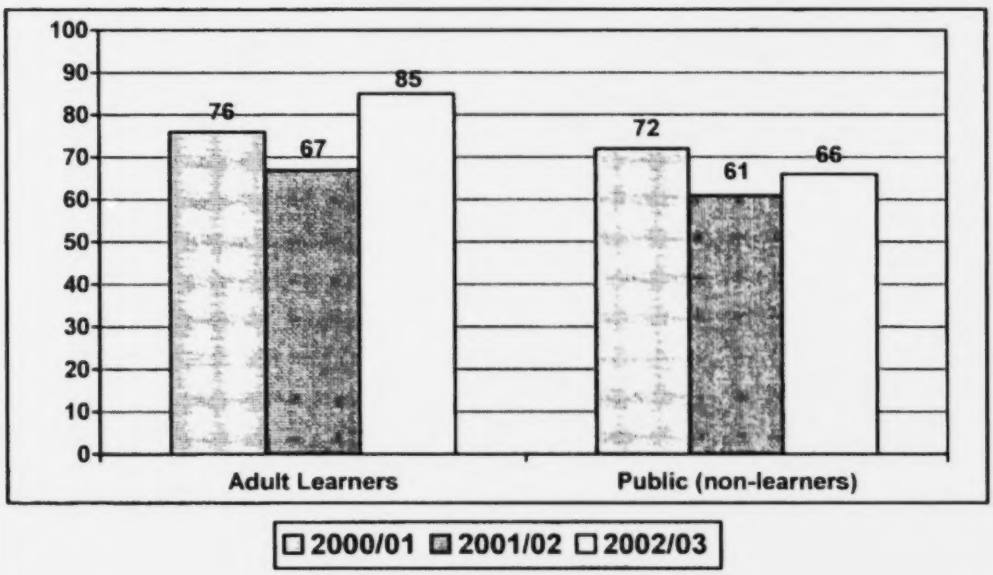
Satisfaction has increased for high school students (3%) since 2001/02 and declined by 6% for parents (ECS-Grade 12). It should be noted that the wording of the actual survey question has changed somewhat from year to year, which could potentially have had an impact on the observed results.

The majority of adult learners and two-thirds of the public (non-learners) feel that adult learners have access to the education or training they want.

The majority (85%) of adult learners felt that Albertans are able to access the education or training they want. Almost one-tenth (12%) of the adult learners surveyed, however, are not satisfied with Albertans access to education and training.

Overall, 66% of the public (non-learners) felt that adult learners have access to the education or training they want.

Satisfaction with Accessibility of Desired Education/Training

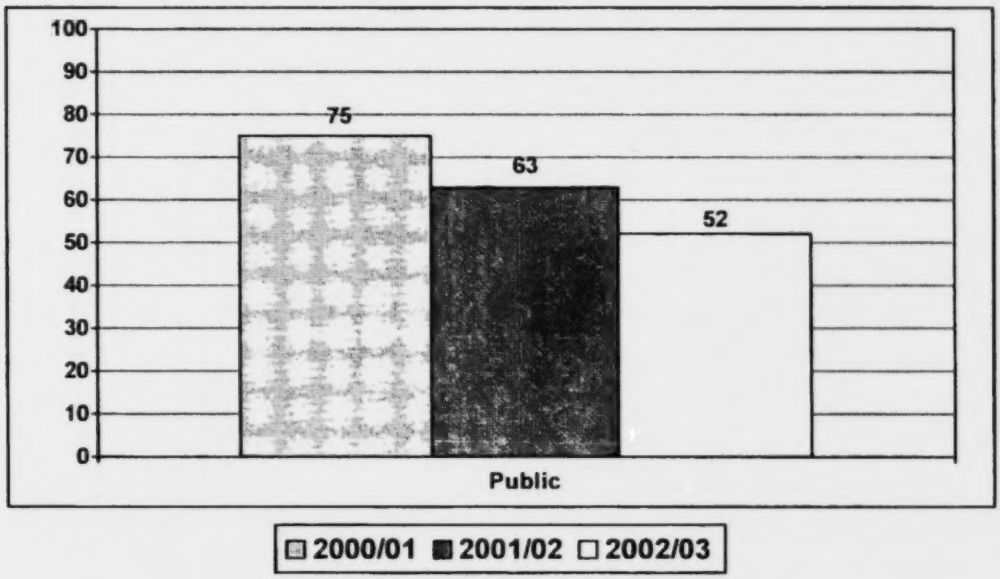


Though for adult learners satisfaction has increased by 18% since 2001/02. It should be noted that the wording of the actual survey question has changed somewhat from year to year, which could potentially have had an impact on the observed results.

Slightly more than half of the public felt that the learning system was within the means of most Albertans.

Overall, 52% of the public agreed that the learning system was within the means of most Albertans (46% "agreed" and 6% "strongly agreed"). A little less than half (45%) of the public surveyed disagreed.

Extent to Which Alberta's Learning System is Within the Means of Most Albertans



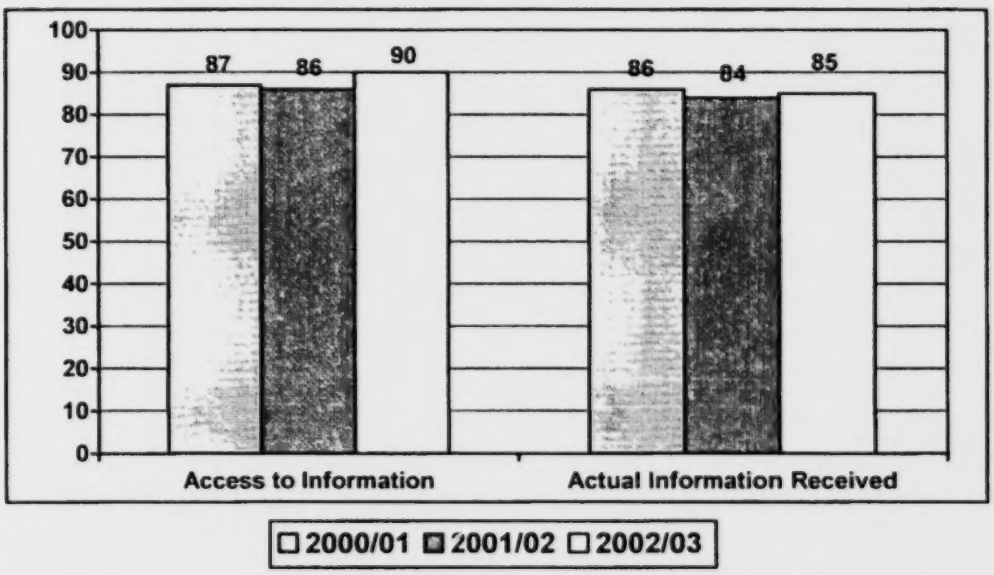
Public agreement in 2002/03 decreased 11% from the 2001/02 results and 23% from the 2000/01 results.

Access to Information

Parent satisfaction with both access to information about their child's educational progress/achievement and actual information received about their child's progress/achievement remains high.

The vast majority of parents were satisfied with their access to information (90%) and the information they receive (85%) about their child's achievement in school.

Parent Satisfaction with Access to Information and Information Received on Their Child's Educational Progress/Achievement

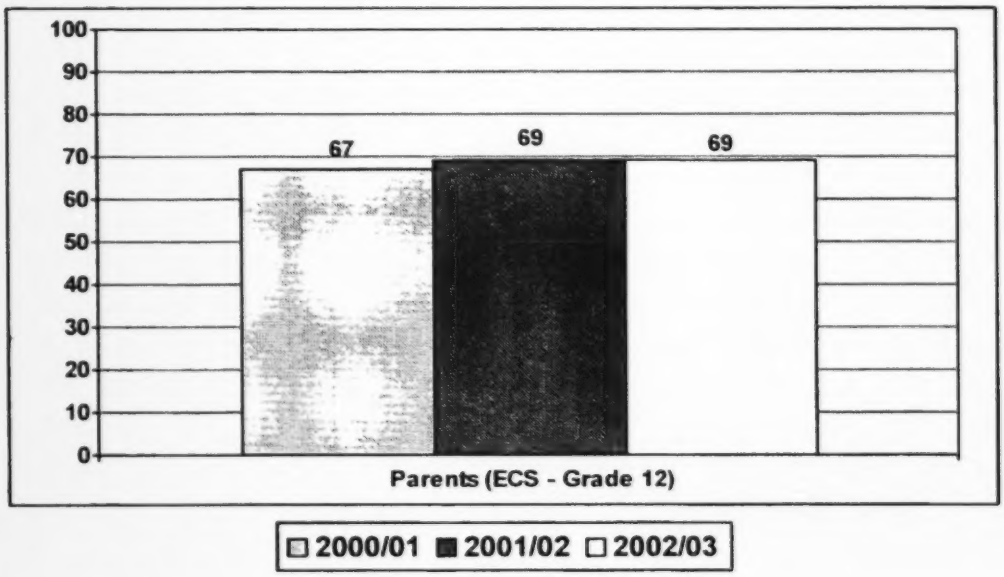


Parent satisfaction with access to information increased by 4% in 2002/03 compared to the results for 2001/02. Parent satisfaction with actual information received has remained relatively constant over the last three years.

More than two-thirds of parents agreed that they received the necessary information to access programs and services that meet their child's learning needs.

69% of parents surveyed agreed they receive the necessary information to access programs and services that meet the learning needs of their child (11% "strongly agreed" and 58% "agreed").

Agreement that Parents Get the Necessary Information to Access Programs and Services that Meet Their Child's Learning Needs



The agreement levels for parents (ECS-Grade 12) have remained consistent with the results of 2001/02 and 2000/01.

Low levels of satisfaction are expressed with respect to parents' and the public's access to information and the information received concerning educational spending.

Both parents and the public were generally not satisfied with their access to information and the actual information received about educational spending. Satisfaction generally declined as the reference point moved further from their community. Slightly more or less than half of the respondents are satisfied with:

- access to (58% parents & 42% public) and information received (56% parents & 39% public) about how money is spent by their child's school
- access to (47% parents & 41% public) and information received (40% parents & 37% public) about how money is spent by their local school board.

Satisfaction with Access to Information

Information about how money is spent:	Parents of ECS to Grade 12 Students**		Public*	
	2001/ 02	2002/ 03	2001/ 02	2002/ 03
In schools in your community*/in your child's school**	58%	58%	40%	42%
By your local school board	48%	47%	37%	41%
By the provincial government on elementary, junior and senior high schools	34%	32%	28%	32%

Satisfaction with Actual Information Received

Information about how money is spent:	Parents of ECS to Grade 12 Students**		Public*	
	2001/ 02	2002/ 03	2001/ 02	2002/ 03
In schools in your community*/in your child's school**	55%	56%	41%	39%
By your local school board	41%	40%	36%	37%
By the provincial government on elementary, junior and senior high schools	28%	25%	25%	25%

In the majority of cases, satisfaction has remained the same or increased from 2001/02 levels.

Parents indicated that the most useful sources of information about Alberta's elementary, junior, and senior high schools are the school newspapers/newsletters, schools, and teachers. The public indicated that the school, the newspaper, and the school newspapers/newsletters were the most useful sources.

Overall the responses of the public are consistent with the results for 2001/02, when parents and the public indicated that the school, the newspaper, and the school newspapers/newsletters were the most useful sources of information.

Adult learners and the public (non-learners) consider the Internet, educational institution publications/brochures/calendars and newspapers to be the most useful sources for accessing information about Alberta's adult learning system.

Adult learners were most likely to select the Internet (34%) as the most useful source of information, while the public (non-learners) was most likely to select educational institution publications/brochures/calendars (31%).

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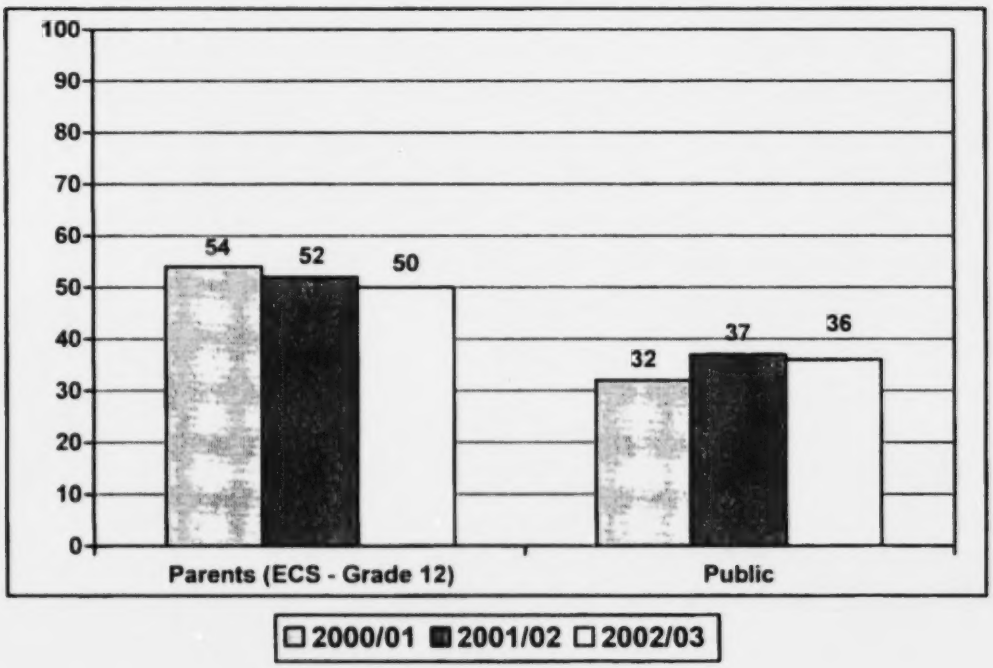
IV. INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

Half of the parents and slightly more than one-third of the public had been involved in decision making at their local school.

Parents were almost evenly split between those who have been involved in the decision making process at a school in their community (50%) and those who have had very little or no involvement (50%).

36% of the public responded that they have been involved in at least some decision making process with their local school, similar to 2001/02 (37%).

Parents and the Public who Indicated Involvement in Decisions at Schools (Percent reporting they were "a lot" or "somewhat" involved)



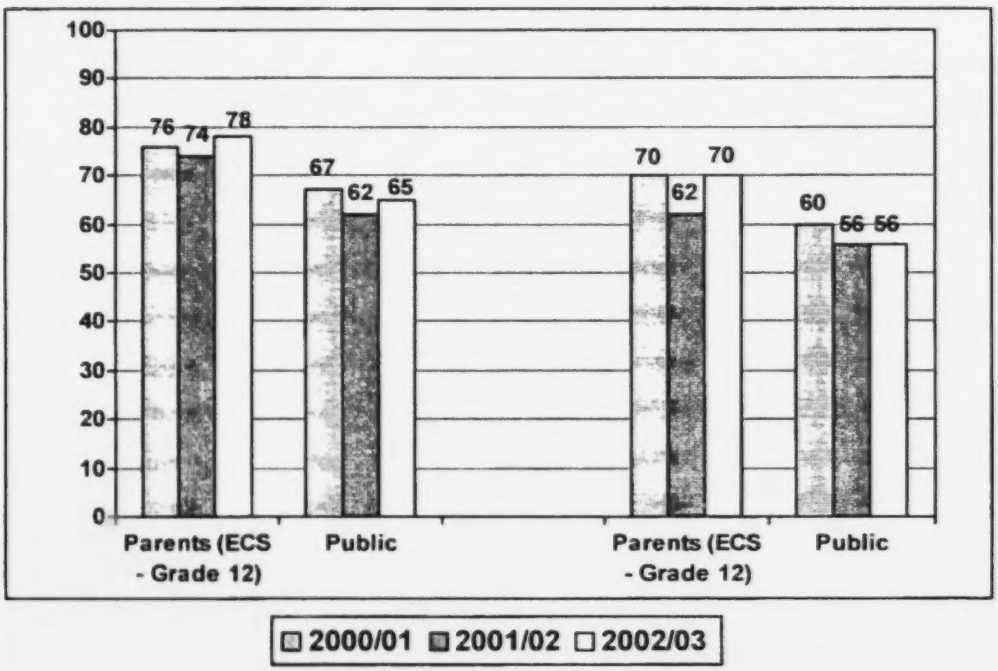
Parents and the public are more satisfied with their opportunity for involvement than their actual involvement in decision making at local schools.

Most (78%) parents indicated that they are satisfied with their opportunity for involvement. These findings are slightly higher than those obtained in 2001/02, when it was found that 74% of the parents surveyed were satisfied with their opportunity for involvement.

65% of the public is satisfied with opportunities available to them to be involved in decision making in their community schools. This is up by 3% from 2001/02 when 62% felt satisfied with the opportunities available to them. 56% of the public responded that they are satisfied with their actual involvement in decision making in their community schools. This is the same as in 2001/02.

Satisfaction with the Opportunity to be Involved in Decisions

Satisfaction with Actual Involvement in Decisions

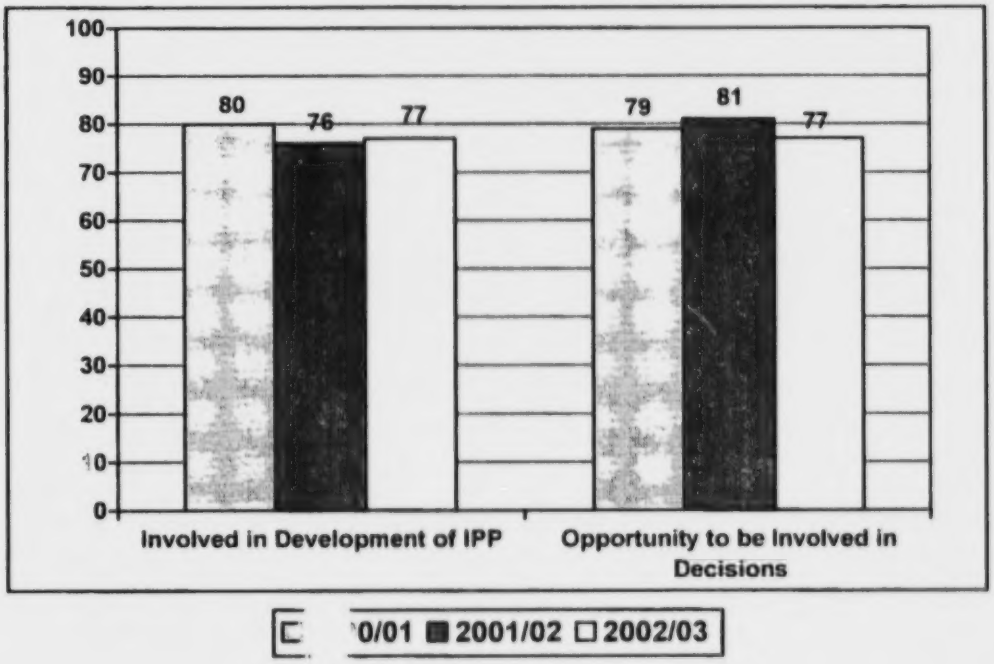


The vast majority of parents of severe special needs children agreed that they were involved in the development of their child's Individual Program Plan (IPP), and that they had opportunity for involvement in decisions regarding services offered to their child.

With respect to their child's Individualized Program Plan (IPP) most parents agreed (77%) that they had been meaningfully involved in the development of the plan. 14% disagreed that they were meaningfully involved in the development of the IPP. The remaining 9% indicated that their child did not have an IPP or they were uncertain if their child had an IPP. These individuals were not asked to rate their satisfaction with the goals identified in the IPP.

Most parents also agreed that they had opportunity for involvement in decisions regarding services offered to their child (77%).

Parent Involvement in the Development of the IPP and Satisfaction with the Opportunity for Involvement in Decisions Regarding Services



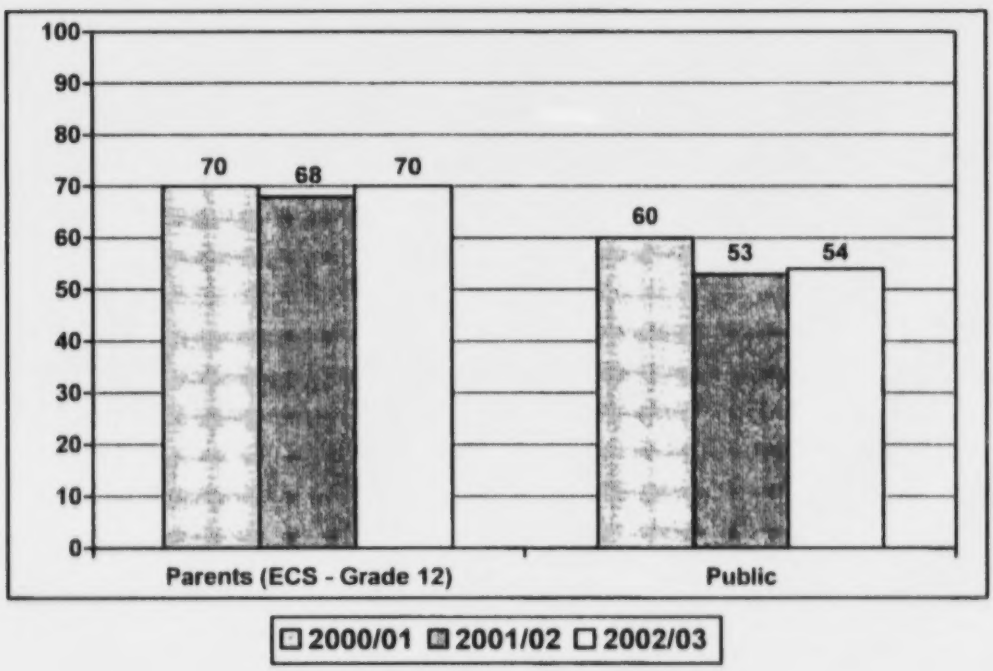
V. PERCEPTION OF VALUE FOR MONEY

Over two-thirds of parents and slightly more than half the public are satisfied that they are receiving value for the money spent in their community's schools.

While parents (70%) appeared to be satisfied that they are receiving value for the money that is spent in their child's school, almost one-quarter (25%) of parents are dissatisfied with the value for money they are currently receiving.

54% of the public is satisfied with the value that they are receiving for the amount of money that is spent in community schools.

Satisfaction with Value for Money Spent on Community Schools



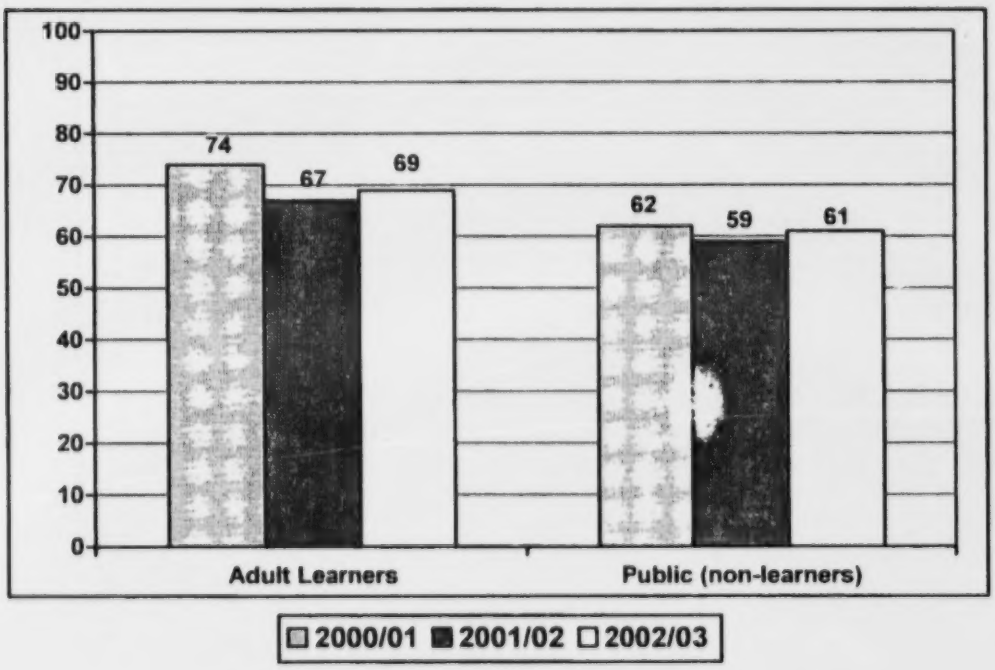
Parent and public satisfaction in 2002/03 are consistent with 2001/02 results.

Over two-thirds of adult learners and over half the public (non-learners) feel they are receiving value for money spent on adult learning institutions.

69% of adult learners surveyed reported satisfaction with the value for money spent on adult learning institutions. This is up from 67% that reported being satisfied in the 2001/02 survey.

61% of the public was satisfied they are receiving value for money that is spent on adult learning institutions. Results are consistent with those from 2001/02.

Satisfaction with Value for Money Spent on Adult Learning Institutions



APPENDIX – RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Project Objectives

R. A. Malatest & Associates was retained by Alberta Learning to conduct the 2002/2003 Leaner, Parent and Public Satisfaction Survey that was administered between February 2 and March 2, 2003. The survey was designed to provide feedback from learners, parents, and the public regarding their perceptions of Alberta's learning system. The survey is based on the goals detailed in Alberta Learning's Business Plan, and some of results of the survey will be used to assess Alberta Learning's performance in terms of these goals.

The main objectives of this study are to determine:

- Satisfaction with the overall quality, responsiveness, and accessibility of Alberta's learning system (Alberta Learning's Business Plan).
- Satisfaction with the preparation of learners for lifelong learning, employment, and citizenship (Alberta Learning's Business Plan).

In addition to information related to these objectives, the survey sought to explore satisfaction with opportunities for involvement, value for money spent on the learning system, and other respondent-specific perspectives on their experiences with the learning system.

Research Methodology

Surveying for the 2002/2003 Alberta Learning Learner and Public Satisfaction Survey was conducted from February 2 to March 2, 2003. The table below highlights the number of interviews completed with each respondent group and the associated margin of error.

Respondent Group	Completions	Margin of Error, 19 times out of 20
Parents of severe special needs Children	800	± 3.1%
Parents of ECS-Grade 12 Students	818	± 2.8%
High School Students	800	± 3.1%
Public	3109	± 1.6%

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